

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions:

1. (currently amended) A method for storing and retrieving advance directives with a database coupled to a communications system, comprising the steps of:

on the initiative of a service provider, registering and storing information about the service provider on the database in anticipation of future creation of advance directives that will come into at least the temporary possession of the service provider;

storing on the database information supplied by the service provider about a person and the person's advance directive; and

automatically transmitting upon request by the service provider information about one or more advance directives that were stored in the database by the service provider; and

processing a request for automatic transmission of information about a specific advance directive made by a requester other than the service provider that supplied information about that specific advance directive by determining if the requester has been previously recorded in the database as being a qualified member of one of a plurality of predefined common networks previously recorded on the database, and if so recorded (a) granting the request if the requester and the service provider cohabit a common one of the common networks that includes the requester and the service provider, and (b) denying the request if the requester and the service provider do not cohabit a common one of the common networks that includes the requester and the service provider, notwithstanding

that the requester has been previously recorded in the database as a qualified member of another one of the predefined common networks.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) A method according to claim [[2]] 1 comprising the step of: prerecording in the database, classifications for members of the predefined network, the step of granting a request if the requester is part of the predefined network being performed by determining if the requester is classified in the database as qualified to have requests for advance directives granted.

4. (original) A method according to claim 3 wherein the step of prerecording classification is performed by:

listing members of the predefined network in the database with a class designation signifying individualized membership privileges, said privileges being settable to include: (a) obtaining advance directives; and (b) recording advance directives in the database.

5. (original) A method according to claim 4 wherein said individual membership privileges being settable to include: (a) creating reports on activity in, or status of, the predefined network; and (b) access to advance directives stored by members in a predetermined group of class designations.

6. (currently amended) A method according to claim [[2]] 1 comprising the step of:

obtaining authorization from a registrant to store and release information about an advance directive executed by the registrant to a specified class of entities; and

storing on the database information supplied by the registrant about the registrant's advance directive; and

granting a request from one of the specified class of entities for automatic transmission of information about the registrant's advance directive.

7. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1 wherein the person is a hospital patient of the service provider, the step of storing on the database comprises the steps of:

providing to the person, through the service provider, information about advance directives; and

obtaining possession of the advance directive from the person before performing the step of storing on the database information supplied by the service provider about the person and the person's advance directive.

8. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of storing on the database comprises the steps of:

providing to the person, through the service provider, information about advance directives; and

obtaining possession of the advance directive from the person before performing the step of storing on the database information supplied by the service provider about the person and the person's advance directive.

9. (original) A method according to claim 8 wherein the step of automatically transmitting information is performed by downloading information from the database over a global network.

10. (original) A method according to claim 8 wherein the step of automatically transmitting information is performed by either (a) downloading information from the database over a global network, or (b) facsimile transmission of information from the database over a telephone network.

11. (original) A method according to claim 10 comprising the step of:
prerecording on the database a facsimile telephone number associated with the service provider to be used when transmitting information from the database to the service provider.

12. (original) A method according to claim 11 wherein the step of automatically transmitting information is performed in response to requests sent either (a) over a global network using a browser, or (b) over a telephone network using a telephone to respond to verbal prompts sent by the communications system.

13. (original) A method according to claim 10 wherein the step of storing on the database is performed by scanning the person's advance directive and storing a digital image produced thereby on the database.

14. (original) A method according to claim 10 comprising the step of:

automatically transmitting upon request by a third party other than the service provider information about one or more advance directives that were stored in the database by the service provider, provided the identity of said third party is recorded in the database and provided such transmission is in accord with predetermined transmission rules.

15. (original) A method according to claim 1 comprising the step of:

prerecording in the database a roster of staff members of the service provider with a level designation signifying individualized authority levels, said authority levels being settable to include: (a) obtaining advance directives, (b) recording advance directives in the database, and (c) creating status and activity reports from information in the database.

16. (original) A method according to claim 1 comprising the step of:

granting a request for automatic transmission of information about a specific advance directive made by a requester other than the service provider that supplied information about that specific advance directive if the specific advance directive has been recorded with a notation signifying that an applicable jurisdiction requires release of the specific advance directive in response to properly made requests.

17. (original) A method according to claim 1 comprising the steps of:

granting a request for automatic transmission of information about a specific advance directive made by a requester other than the service provider that supplied information about that specific advance directive if (a) the specific advance directive has

been recorded with a notation signifying that an applicable jurisdiction requires release of the specific advance directive in response to properly made requests, or (b) the requester has been previously recorded in the database as being a qualified member of a predefined common network that includes the requester and the service provider.

18. (original) A method according to claim 17 comprising the step of:

in instances where the requester will be denied automatic transmission of information about the specific advance directive, notifying the requester of the existence in the database of information about the specific advance directive and how to obtain information about it.

19. (original) A method according to claim 1 comprising the steps of:

granting a request for automatic transmission of information about a specific advance directive made by a requester other than the service provider that supplied information about that specific advance directive if (a) the specific advance directive has been recorded in the database with a notation signifying that an applicable jurisdiction requires release of the specific advance directive in response to properly made requests, (b) the requester has been previously recorded in the database as being a qualified member of a predefined common network that includes the requester and the service provider, or (c) the specific advance directive has been recorded in the database with a notation signifying that it can be released if the requester has been granted entry to a list of qualified recipients recorded in the database.

20. (currently amended) A system for storing and retrieving advance directives comprising:

a communications system; and

a database coupled to said communications system, said database being arranged to register and store information about a service provider in anticipation of future creation of advance directives that will come into at least the temporary possession of the service provider, said database being arranged to store information supplied by the service provider about a person and the person's advance directive, the database being structured to store a table of qualified members arranged in a plurality of predefined common networks,

said communications system being operable in response to a request by the service provider to automatically transmit information about one or more advance directives that were stored in the database by the service provider,

said communications system being operable to automatically transmit information about a specific advance directive made by a requester other than the service provider that supplied information about that specific advance directive if the requester has been previously recorded in the database as being a qualified member of one of the predefined common networks, and if so recorded (a) granting the request if the requester and the service provider cohabit a common one of the common networks that includes the requester and the service provider, and (b) denying the request if the requester and the service provider do not cohabit a common one of the common networks that includes the requester and the service provider, notwithstanding that the requester has been previously recorded in the database as a qualified member of another one of the predefined common

networks.

21. (canceled)

22. (currently amended) A system according to claim ~~24~~ 20 wherein the database is prerecorded with classifications assigned to members of the predefined network, the communications system being operable to automatically transmit information if the requester is classified in the database as qualified to receive advance directives.

23. (original) A system according to claim 22 wherein the database is arranged with a table of members of the predefined network with a class designation signifying individualized membership privileges, said privileges being settable in the database to include: (a) obtaining advance directives; and (b) recording advance directives in the database.

24. (original) A system according to claim 23 wherein said individual membership privileges being settable in the database to include: (a) creating reports on activity in, or status of, the predefined network; and (b) access to advance directives stored by members in a predetermined group of class designations.

25. (currently amended) A system according to claim ~~24~~ 20 wherein the database has some of its records marked to signify open access to health care providers, said communications system being operable in response to a request from a health care provider to automatically transmit information about advance directives marked for open access.

26. (original) A system according to claim 20 wherein the communications system is operable to download from the database onto a global network information requested by the service provider.

27. (original) A system according to claim 20 wherein the communications system is operable in response to requests from the service provider to either (a) download information from the database over a global network, or (b) facsimile transmit information from the database over a telephone network.

28. (original) A system according to claim 27 wherein the database is prerecorded with a facsimile telephone number associated with the service provider and to be used when transmitting information from the database to the service provider.

29. (original) A system according to claim 28 wherein the communications network is operable to automatically transmit information in response to requests sent either (a) over a global network using a browser, or (b) over a telephone network using a telephone to respond to verbal prompts sent by the communications system.

30. (original) A system according to claim 27 wherein the database is arranged to store scanned digital images of the person's advance directive.

31. (original) A system according to claim 27 wherein the database is arranged to store the identity of one or more third parties, said communications system being operable

to automatically transmit upon request by one of the third parties other than the service provider information about one or more advance directives that were stored in the database by the service provider, provided the identity of said third party is recorded in the database and provided such transmission is in accord with predetermined transmission rules stored on the database.

32. (original) A system according to claim 20 wherein the database is prerecorded with a roster of staff members of the service provider with a level designation signifying individualized authority levels, said authority levels being settable to include: (a) obtaining advance directives, (b) recording advance directives in the database, and (c) creating status and activity reports from information in the database.

33. (original) A system according to claim 20 wherein the communications system is operable to automatically transmit information about a specific advance directive made by a requester other than the service provider that supplied information about that specific advance directive if the specific advance directive has been recorded in the database with a notation signifying that an applicable jurisdiction requires release of the specific advance directive in response to properly made requests.

34. (original) A system according to claim 20 wherein the communications system is operable to automatically transmit information about a specific advance directive made by a requester other than the service provider that supplied information about that specific advance directive if (a) the specific advance directive has been recorded with a notation

signifying that an applicable jurisdiction requires release of the specific advance directive in response to properly made requests, or (b) the requester has been previously recorded in the database as being a qualified member of a predefined common network that includes the requester and the service provider.

35. (original) A system according to claim 34 wherein the communications system is operable in instances where the requester will be denied automatic transmission of information about the specific advance directive, to notify the requester of the existence in the database of information about the specific advance directive and how to obtain information about it.

36. (original) A system according to claim 20 wherein the communications system is operable to automatically transmit information about a specific advance directive in response to a request by a requester other than the service provider that supplied information about that specific advance directive if (a) the specific advance directive has been recorded in the database with a notation signifying that an applicable jurisdiction requires release of the specific advance directive in response to properly made requests, (b) the requester has been previously recorded in the database as being a qualified member of a predefined common network that includes the requester and the service provider, or (c) the specific advance directive has been recorded in the database with a notation signifying that it can be released if the requester has been granted entry to a list of qualified recipients recorded in the database.